Agreement between India and Mauritius for Surveillance of EEZ of Mauritius

2397. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formalised an agreement with Mauritian for the surveillance of exclusive economic zone of Mauritius in Indian ocean by the Indian Navy;

(b) whether this calls for continued regular deployment of Indian Naval vessels and personnel in the Mauritian waters;

(c) whether our navy is fully stretched in keeping under vigil, its own long coastline; and

(d) whether the Ministry of Defence was consulted before this agreement was formalised?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir. India has not signed any formal agreement with Mauritius for surveillance of their exclusive economic zone. However, in January, 2003, on a request from Mauritius, India had agreed to assist Mauritius in the surveillance of its exclusive economic zone.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) In the context of (a) above, Ministry of Defence was consulted.

Recruitment of scouts to plug infiltration

2398. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry has a proposal to recruit scouts from villages to plug infiltration across the Line of Control;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government had recruited scouts from villages earlier; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and whether such recruitment helped

realise the desired intention for which they have been recruited on earlier occasions?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Scout Battalions such as Ladakh Scouts, Garhwal Scouts, Kumaon Scouts and Dogra Scouts are regular battalions forming part of the Indian Army. The personnel for such battalions are recruited locally, to capitalise on their knowledge of language and familiarity with terrain and are deployed in respective regions along our Northern borders.

Induction of Lakshya in IAF

2399. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that indigenously developed Pilotless Target Aircraft (PTA) "Lakshya" has been successfully fired from the Interim Test Range (ITR);

(b) whether this aircraft has now been included in our Air Force; and

(c) whether this remote controlled aircraft is being used for imparting training to the pilots?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indigenously designed and developed PTA — Lakshya has been successfully test fired from the ITR. Five Lakshyas have been delivered for induction in Indian Air Force (IAF) as per their requirements.

(c) This remotely controlled aircraft is designed for training of missile and gun crews for firing practice against a simulated enemy aircraft.

Construction of roads by BRO in Uttaranchal

†2400. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.